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**Lord LANSDOWN'S**

**S P E E C H**

Against the *Occasional Conformity Bill.*

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1932

THE  
SPEECH  
OF  
LORD LANSDOWNE,  
IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS,  
ON THE 19TH DECEMBER, 1718.

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# THE S P E C H

Against the Occasional Conformity Bill.

*December the 19th, 1718.*



A VING never trespassed on your Patience before, I may hope for the readier Excuse if I trouble you for once, and I give you my Word that no Indulgence shall encourage me to make a Custom of it.

*My Lords,*

I always understood that the Toleration was meant as an Ease to tender Consciences, and not an Indulgence to hardened ones. The Act to prevent Occasional Conformity corrects only a particular Crime of particular Men; it concerns no other Set of *Dissenters*, but those Followers of *Judas* who came to the *Lord's Supper* to sell and betray him; this Crime, however palliated or defended, even by some reverend Fathers of the Church, is no less than making the God of Truth as it were in Person subservient to Acts of Hypocrisy; no less than sacrificing the Mif-

tical

tical Body and Blood of our Saviour to worldly and sinister Purposes. An Impiety of the highest Nature, which in Justice calls for Correction, and in Charity for Prevention.

The bare receiving the Holy Eucharist could never be intended simply as a Qualification for an Office, but as an open Declaration, and indubitable Proof of being a sincere Member of the Church. Whoever presumes to receive it with any other View profanes it, and may be said to seek his Preferment in this World, by eating and drinking to his own Damnation in the next.

It is very surprizing to hear the Merit of *Dissenters* so highly extolled and magnified within these Walls; for who is he amongst us that cannot tell of some Ancestors either Sequester'd or Murther'd by them. It is notoriously known that they brought the Royal Martyr to the Block, but to extenuate that Guilt in favour of the *Presbyterians*, it seems to be insinuated by a very learned Lord, that they perform'd good Offices at last, and were Instruments in the Restoration. What Offices, what Instruments, upon what Terms did they resort to the King? Upon no better than their Brethren the *Scots* had invited him before, to have an Insignificant Tool of a King, a Cypher of a King, to walk in their Leading strings. To restore themselves, not him, to Dominion was their only Aim, they groaned under the Oppression of other Sectaries, after having been themselves the greatest Oppressors of Mankind, nor had they any other Means of arriving at Deliverance (or Revenge rather) but by recovering Royal Power under a nominal King. This General *Monk* well knew who was privy to their Intrigues, and hence arose all the Difficulties that incumbered him in the prosecution of his own Scheme: He was under a Necessity of making use of their Discontent, and could neither entirely trust or throw them off: But that the Monarchy was restored

stored free and independent, the Church re-established pure and undefiled was owing to his Virtue and good Conduct ; no thanks to the *Presbyterians*.

Nor was K. C. scarce warm in his Throne, before they broke out into a new Rebellion, and continued incessant Disturbers of his whole Reign, sometimes with sham Plots, and sometimes with real ones.

It was likewise observed by the same learned Lord, that they were hardly used, Fined, Banished, and Imprisoned be it so, but 'twas not upon a Religious Account; they might be punished for breach of the Law, disturbing the publick Peace, for illegal Meetings and Assemblies ; and other State Crimes, but what was there more in that than the present Case of the *Nonjurors*.

The Clemency of that Reign, even to *Dissenters*, has been sufficiently vindicated by a noble Earl, who was call'd up (by some Reflections which fell from a reverend Prelate) to give an Account of the intended Comprehension. The Church opened her Arms, the Clergy and Prelates, the King condescended to Invite them with all the Temptations of Indulgence and Christian Charity, but what was the Return ? Nothing but a morote haughty Deportment, severe Contradictions or sullen Evasions ; they scorned to enter our Churches as Brethren and fellow Christians, but as Conquerors and Plunderers, they have no Grace but what is founded in Dominion. Their behaviour in the subsequent Reign of K. J. is fresh in every ones Memory ; that unhappy Prince was undone by giving Attention to their Addresses, and depending upon their Promises.

But 'tis said they have been not only quiet since, but have appear'd Zealous for the present Establishment, and no wonder, for who but themselves or their Favourers have been thought worthy to be countenanced.

A noble

A noble Lord inquiring into the Reason of the present universal Discontent (for such I find it is agreed to be on all Hands) has been pleased to impute it to mis-conduct in the Administration; a little unluckily I confess, since it was answer'd That at the Time when that Discontent most flamed, his Lordship himself was at the Head of the Administration.

Another noble Lord very deservedly in a high Station, charg'd it upon Fate, the malignity of the Stars, a certain unaccountable Disposition in the Heavens, for which there is no apparent Reason nor Remedy.

But the Reason is plain, flagrant and notorious; the early Impatience and Presumption of *Dissenters*, their insolent and undissembled Expectations, their open Insults of the Clergy, their fixing Bills on our Churches with this scandalous Inscription, *A House to be Let*: Their publick Vindication of the Murder of K. Charles; their vile Reflections on the Memory of Queen Anne, for ever dear to the People of England, besides many other indecent arrogant Provocations (too many to enumerate) was too much to bear, so that the Violences that ensued let the Aggressors answer for: But then their acting all this not only with impunity but with a Reward out of the publick Treasure was more than a sufficient Ground for Jealousie.

A noble Duke seems with some *Warmth* to have taken Offence, that the *Roman Catholicks* and *Dissenters* have been mentioned in the Debate upon the same Level, whereas their Religion is High Treason. But I never yet understood that their Religion was High Treason; indeed I have heard that it might be High Treason to make Converts to it; and by the same Reason the Reformed Religion may be High Treason in Popish Countries. But if we may compare them with the *Dissenters*, upon a Foot of Merit with respect to the Government, the *Catholicks*, as far as has been

been yet made to appear, have infinitely the Advantage. To whom do we owe our *Magna Charta*? To our ancient Barons unreform'd; and were there not as many struggles for Liberty before the Reformation as since?

To whom do we owe the Revolution but to Catholick Powers? Even the Pope himself United to encourage and support the Prince of Orange in his Undertaking,

To whom do we owe our present Security in the Protestant Establishment, but to the most Potent, the most Arbitrary, the most Famous for Persecution of all the Popish Powers, the most inveterate and implacable Enemies of the Protestant perswasion; France, Savoy, and the Emperour. And have not the Ministers one after another assur'd us, that these mortal Enemies to our Souls in another World, are our only Guarrantees for our Salvation in this.

Our Protestant Brethren the States, were neither consulted nor intrusted, but seem to have been left like Slaves to follow the Dictates of Great Britain and France, and to Acceed implicitly at their Peril; they have however thought fit hitherto to *Dissent*, tho' perhaps they may in time occasionally Conform, as Circumstances may happen to press. But 'till then, our only trusty Allies are our good Catholick Friends.

If any Man can say as much for the *Dissenters*, let him speak; the reverend Prelates who have exerted in this Debate, having been prepar'd to fulminate against the Test, without being admitted into the Secret of withdrawing the Question have unfortunately employ'd their Quivers in the Air.

\*One indeed there is, who must not be forgot, who wandring beyond the rest in a long Historical Collection from Pamphlets and Libels, has let himself

\* Dr. Gibson, Bishop of Lin---n.

loose against the Sacred Memory of the Royal Martyr; he has accused him, if not of all Popery, of half Popery, very near Popery, almost all Popery; why would he not speak out? For what means this School Distinction, betwixt almost all a Papist, and quite. Hard Fate of the best of Men and of Kings.

He who renouev'd the Purple to preserve the Crown, who dyed for the Church, and who is commemorated as a Martyr for the Church, is yet expos'd within an Age after his Descent from the Scaffold to the Grave, to be murthered over again in Fame, even in the supreme Court of Judicature by a Successor in that venerable Order, that very Episcopacy, for which he Sacrificed his Liberty, his Life, his Crown.

The execrable Wretch who sever'd his Head from his Body, perform'd the inhuman Office in a Mask; but this holy Executioner, who cuts what the Ax could not hurt, what the Regecides could not take from him, his good Name, has not been ashamed to attempt it bare fac'd. It grieves me that this Animadversion should fall to my Lot, to the Lot of any private Word: I was in hopes a General Indignation would have warm'd this noble Assembly, to have made it their own Act to reprehend such irreverend Slanders, as would have much better become a Descendant from Bradshaw than a Successor of Laud; but I ask pardon, this unlucky Reflection may have transported me too far. In a Word, that I may not appear prejudic'd to Merit in any Man, I will conclude, with this Motion, that a List be laid before us of such Dissenters by Name, as have in any Kind merited from the Publick, and I will most readily come into any Measures that may distinguish them and their particular Service.

God forbid but that they should have all their Deserts.

F I N I S.